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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 25 March 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, dated 24 March 2008, on the latest statement of the State Duma of the Russian Federation on the Russian Federation's policy with respect to Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestria (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 16, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasani**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 25 March 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

24 March 2008

On 21 March 2008 the State Duma, Russia's lower house of Parliament, issued a statement on "the Russian Federation's policy with respect to Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestria".

That document, which views the sovereign right of a country to determine independently its own foreign-political priorities as a motive for justifying infringement of Georgia's territorial integrity, presents yet another attempt to interfere openly in the internal affairs of the neighbouring sovereign State and is directly aimed, in terms of both meaning and pathos, against the main principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia is particularly concerned over the fact that the State Duma's statement contains calls for the President and the Government of the Russian Federation to consider the expediency of recognizing the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Georgia's territorial integrity is recognized and guaranteed by the norms of international law as well as 36 resolutions adopted regarding the conflict by the Security Council since 1993. The statement of the Russian State Duma is at variance with all the above-mentioned documents and indicates again that the Russian Federation has deprived itself of any political, legal or moral right to claim the role of a neutral and unbiased mediator in the conflict resolution process.

Of concern to the Georgian Foreign Ministry is that part of the statement in which members of the Russian State Duma call on the Government of the Russian Federation "to consider the possibility of reinforcing the potential of peacekeeping forces in the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian conflict zones and to take into account other measures aimed at ensuring peace and security in this region".

Against the background of the Russian Federation's unilateral withdrawal from the 19 January 1996 decision of the CIS Council of Heads of State on measures for settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, this recommendation of the State Duma poses a real threat of the region's militarization, military cooperation with the separatist regimes and Russia's illegal military presence in the region.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia states that any step taken without the consent of the Georgian authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia concerning the modification of the strength of the military contingent stationed there, armaments, mandate, terms, configuration or any other parameter, as well as deployment of any new armed unit, will be considered, in compliance with resolution 3314 (XXIX) (14 December 1974) of the United Nations General Assembly, as an act of aggression, with all the ensuing consequences, directed against the State of Georgia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia strongly urges the international community to give due assessment to the actions of the Russian State authorities and react adequately to prevent possible escalation of the tension in the region.